

Bruce Grey United Way Seeing High Demand For Utility Bill Assistance

By [Janice MacKay](#) on January 30, 2015 12:31pm **Owen Sound Sun Times**

The United Way of Bruce Grey is already seeing a dramatic increase in the number of people requesting help from the Utility Assistance program.

Francesca Dobbyn says 165 families were seeking assistance in the first three weeks of this year for a total of \$73,000. She says that is a third of all of the people who needed the program last year.

51 families asked over \$21,000 to help with their union gas bill. The average bill is \$450.

20 applicants needed \$10,000 in support from Hydro One, with the average bill at over \$1,000.

31 residents applied for \$11,000. in financial support for their Westario bills. Dobbyn says the average bill is about \$400. because Westario will disconnect customers in the winter so bills don't get as high.

There were 63 applicants looking for over \$31,000 in support for wood, propane, and oil bills.

Financial support for wood, propane, and oil bills is entirely fund raised from the community.

Last year, over \$120,000. was raised to address that need.



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Wind Turbine Working Group Opposes Plan For More Wind Power Proposals

By [Janice MacKay](#) on January 30, 2015 12:29pm **Owen Sound Sun Times**

The Multi Municipal Wind Turbine Working group has written a letter of protest over the province's request for new wind power proposals.

Chair and Arran-Elderslie Deputy Mayor Mark Davis is asking the minister of energy why the province wants to add another 300 mega watts of wind power.

He questions how the province can add more to an already mismanaged system.

"The financial ramifications of what the green energy act has done to the cost of electricity is decimating this province," he says. "Whether it be from manufacturing sector, to just regular good taxpaying people, we're accomplishing nothing other than taking ourselves out of a competitive market place."

Davis says electricity ratepayers continue to watch in alarmed disbelief as their hydro bills skyrocket.

He points to the auditor general's report that we pay twice for wind energy because of the intermittent and unpredictable nature of wind mainly produced at time of low demand.

He says the operators of less expensive baseload generating systems such as gas and nuclear must curtail generation or sell excess power at bargain prices to New York and Michigan.

"We're diverting power at Niagara Falls, and we're diverting steam into Lake Huron at Bruce Nuclear when the wind comes on," says Davis. "We're paying for all that, and we're paying way too much for wind, and then we're taking excess and selling it to Michigan and New York at a huge loss."

Davis also says some families are forced to choose between paying the utility bill or buying groceries.

The letter calls for the provincial government to re-evaluate the damage the current energy policy is doing to Ontario's economy.

However, Davis is doubtful the province will listen.

"They're on a plan. Samsung has them in their back pocket," he says. "They have an \$8-billion deal with Samsung that we've asked to see, and apparently nobody has ever seen it. so it's pretty hard to see even how badly tied up they are because the deal's not a public document, apparently, yet it was our dollars that did it."

Davis says the working group represents a dozen municipalities who are calling on the province to scrap the Green Energy Act until there is a system to store the intermittent energy being produced.

He says water power is green, and always ready to produce power when needed.



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